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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 001615

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/01/2015

TAGS: PREL PHUM MOPS EAID IN NP

SUBJECT: GOI OPPOSES NON-LETHAL MILITARY AID AND MEDICAL TRAINING FOR RNA

REF: A. KATHMANDU 470

¶B. DELHI 1482

Classified By: DCM Robert O. Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

¶11. (C) The GOI feels strongly that the USG should delay the first phase of the Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) for the Royal Nepalese Army, because this is not the time to send mixed messages to the King. In a March 2 meeting with Polcouns and Poloff scheduled to discuss Bhutan, MEA Joint Secretary (Nepal) Ranjit Rae raised the issued of US military

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assistance to the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA), following on a March 1 discussion between our Ambassadors in Kathmandu (Ref A). Drawing on Refs A and B, Polcouns explained that our possible JCET would provide medical training with a humanitarian intent. We also noted the GOI's decision not to return RNA students receiving military training in India if that training is ongoing. Rae argued that it was imperative that there be no daylight between the GOI and USG position and that medical training provided by US troops inside Nepal would be seen by His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN) as a normalization of military relations.

¶12. (C) Rae emphasized that the RNA was starting to feel the squeeze and now was not the time to soften our position, citing as evidence a phone call between the RNA chief and an Indian counterpart in which the Nepalese appealed for India to re-open its pipeline. He added that the GOI is "getting feelers that the King is having a re-think and could release political prisoners and restore democratic freedoms as early as next week." With this in mind, Rae asserted, the USG should hold the line on lethal and non-lethal equipment and training in Nepal. He conceded that the GOI will allow military training of Nepalese officers in India to continue, but no training is being conducted across the border and no military equipment of any sort is being provided by India to the RNA. Rae noted that the issue of non-lethal US military equipment had not been raised with Foreign Secretary Saran when Ambassador Moriarty saw him on February 26 (Ref B).

¶13. (C) Rae commented that Nepal was becoming a major issue in domestic politics. The Foreign Minister confirmed to the DCM at a social function that Nepal would be the first question he faces in this Parliamentary session. He added that he was encouraged that Indian political parties were maintaining a united front on the issue and not giving the King reason to be optimistic. He concluded that the message to the King remained that he needs to make some move towards democracy in order to receive assistance from the GOI.

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